

**DEACON TUDOR'S DIARY; OR,  
"MEMORANDOMS FROM 1709, &C., TO  
1775 & 1778, 1780 AND TO '93".  
A RECORD OF MORE OR LESS  
IMPORTANT EVENTS IN BOSTON, FROM  
1732 TO 1793 BY AN EYE WITNESS**

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# **JOHN TUDOR & WILLIAM TUDOR**

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*John Silliman*

*Samuel C. Powell.*

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OR

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EDITED BY

WILLIAM TUDOR, A. B.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE.

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This copy of the memorandums of Deacon John Tudor it has been thought worth while to print, since many of the episodes mentioned by the old deacon were seen by him personally, and in many of the stirring events of the time either he, or his son were actively employed. The period of over 60 years, from 1732 to 1793, covered by the memorandums was the most eventful in the history of Boston and of the Commonwealth. The long contest with the redskins had ended in the previous century. The Colonists had already succeeded in their struggle for existence, and were very prosperous on the whole of the long coast line. The French held, however, the extreme Northern and Southern settlements, and had extended a girdle of strongholds from Quebec to New Orleans, and along the western fringe of the Colonial border from Maine to Georgia they with their savage allies were a constant menace to the outlying settlements of the English. The fall of Louisburg in 1745 was the first important success for the Colonists, but resulted in nothing, and it was not until the fall of Quebec and Montreal 15 years later that the French were finally reduced to their Louisiana possessions. The period from 1730 to 1760 was on the whole quiet and uneventful for the English Colonies. They had advanced rapidly in wealth and population during the first sixty years of the century. The immigration of the English had been rapid, commerce had taken great strides, and the coast towns had especially grown. While authorities differ widely as to the number of people in Boston at given periods there seems

little doubt that at the end of the seventeenth century there were no more than 7,000 inhabitants. It appears probable that these had increased to nearly 25,000 in 1760 and that the town was then not only the most populous in the colonies, but with the exception of London was the largest and most prosperous English town. The Colonies had, up to this period, been left much to themselves, the English being occupied with their Continental wars and with the exception of a constant petty struggle between the Colonial legislators and the Royal Governors, no other interference with the liberty of the Colonies was attempted. With the coronation of George the third, however, in 1760, came a change. This man seems to have forgotten that he was king only by Act of Parliament, that the English were a people who had within less than a century beheaded one king and banished another, and that the American colonists were in all respects essentially English, with not only all the traditions of their ancestors, but for four or five generations had practically governed themselves. The subserviency of the English to the authority of the Crown had been gradually increasing ever since the overthrow of the Commonwealth. This was possibly due to the steady emigration of the prosperous middle class to America.\* The king flattered no doubt by his adherents into the belief that the Colonists could be coerced into contributing to the expense of the many English wars, and knowing that he would be supported by a strong party in Parliament, decided upon a Colonial tax without the consent of the local legislatures. This act, which we must consider fortunate, since it resulted in the birth of a Nation from a union of the scattered Colonies, was not resisted by the

\* The number of inhabitants of the English settlements of North America about 1776-7 has been estimated by different authorities at from one and a half to three millions.



whole people. The best estimates are that not over two-thirds, and in many of the Colonies not over half the people were in sympathy with resistance to the taxes. Amongst those who supported the Crown were the greater portion of the leading merchants and of course all the official class, which then was represented by, or connected with most of the wealthier men of the community. The closing of the Port of Boston, as the Crown's answer to the destruction of the tea, was an act of tyranny that could have no justification. The tea was destroyed by a mob, which had no official support. The leading merchants were probably entirely innocent, and they were the ones punished by the Boston Port Bill. No greater act of folly could have been done by the Crown, since it at once united all the disaffected Colonies, in showing them what each might expect if the taxes were opposed. It seems surprising after this that so few of the leading merchants were in sympathy with the patriot cause, as the commerce was nearly destroyed. The town's population fell off steadily from this time and only recovered slightly after the Evacuation by the British, as some months after there were reckoned but 10,000 people in the place. Nearly twelve hundred Tories went off in the British ships and the town can scarcely have contained more than four thousand people after the Evacuation, as Gen. Gage's census of the previous July gave but 6,573 persons outside of the military.

Up to the end of the war the residents had increased to twelve thousand, but not until the end of the Century had Boston recovered her former population and prosperity of the year 1760. No doubt the adherents of the Crown had carried away much of their wealth, and though many of them returned after the war, the town recovered very slowly.

The reader must picture to himself the small town

of Boston of 1730, containing ten to twelve thousand people; the peninsula almost an island at the spring tides and connected with the main land only by the then narrow neck across which Marlboro', now Washington Street meandered. All around the town were salt marshes; only a few winding and narrow streets; the great height of Beacon Hill and the connecting hills, towering above all the houses. There were even then many substantial buildings on King, now State Street. The houses nearly all had gardens and were scattered over a considerable area. Most of the houses were substantial though built of wood. The old town was probably much like Portsmouth, N. H., as it exists to-day, and resembled many of the English seaport towns of that period. The Castle, afterwards Fort Independence, and now Castle Island, was then far down the harbor. East Boston was Noddie's Island, and South Boston was Dorchester Heights.\*

The following description of the old Deacon left by his grandson may be found interesting:

"Thus the old man continued his memoirs until he was upwards of 85 years old and until he arrived at about one year and 5 months of his death. He died on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March, 1795, going willingly and wishingly out of this world. He was a man of strong mind and healthful body and remarkable for his integrity. His education was that of a common school. His personal appearance at the time that I can recollect him, when he was above 80 was very fine. Tall and erect, with long curling perfectly white hair and when walking with a broad hat and long cane, he was calculated to inspire all the reverence which can attach to an old man, who bears about him in his air and manner the evidence of a life well spent."

\* See Lodge's *Historic Towns*, Drake's *History of Boston*, and Winsor's *Memorial History of Boston*.

The editor has added at the end of the book a list of the births, marriages and deaths of Deacon Tudor and his descendants to the 5th generation. This list is as accurate as it was possible to make it in the limited time given to the subject. The copies of portraits of the Deacon; his son Judge Tudor, and three of his grandsons have also been included, because these things are of interest to the family. The family coat of arms used in the book was furnished some years since by the English Herald's College, and appears to correspond exactly with an old seal recently found amongst the family papers. Regarding the origin of Deacon John Tudor, it is only known that he was brought to Boston in 1715, at about six years of age by his widowed mother, who afterwards married Capt. John Langdon. There was a sister of John Tudor's, named Elizabeth, who married Capt. George Mount. From the date of her birth May 26th, 1716, it is possible that she was a half sister of John's, and a child by the mother's second marriage. At all events she died without issue Aug. 19, 1765. The mother is recorded as dying in 1763, at 84 years and must have been born in 1679, and was 36 years old when she came to Boston in 1715. The only further information about John Tudor's origin is the written statement left by him that his father's Christian name was William, and his grandfather's was Thomas. A short sketch of Col. William Tudor mentioned several times in the memorandums with letters addressed to him will also be found at end of the volume.

The editor is indebted to his brother Frederic for the use of the die with Tudor coat of arms and other family records; to Robert H. Gardiner, Esq., for copies of the portraits by Stuart, of Judge Tudor and his son William Tudor, the latter author of the "Life of James Otis," and many other publications, and to L. Vernon Briggs, Esq.,